

Consider An Alarm

Alarms can be a good investment, especially if you have many valuables in your home, live in an isolated area, or an area with a history of burglaries.

- Check with several companies before you buy so you can decide what level of security fits your needs. Do business with an established company and check references before signing a contract.
- Learn how to use your system properly! Don't "cry wolf" by setting off false alarms. People will stop paying attention and you will probably be fined.
- Some less expensive options—motion sensor activated lights or lights with photo cells that come on when it's dark and off when it's light.

Burglars Do More Than Steal

Burglars can commit rapes, robberies, and assaults if they are surprised by someone coming home or pick a home that is occupied.

- If something looks questionable—a slit screen, a broken window or an open door—don't go in. Call the police from someplace else.
- At night, if you think you hear someone breaking in, leave safely if you can, then call police. If you can't leave, lock yourself in a room and call police. If an intruder is in your room, pretend you are asleep.
- Guns are responsible for many accidental deaths in the home every year. Think carefully before buying a gun. If you do own one, learn how to store it and use it safely.

There's More You Can Do

- Join a neighborhood watch group (West Des Moines Police Department's Crime Free Neighborhoods) and/or a neighborhood association. If one doesn't exist, you can start one with help from local law enforcement.
- Never leave a message on your home voice mail that indicates you may be away from home.
- Work with neighbors and local government to organize community clean-ups. The cleaner your neighborhood, the less attractive it is to crime.



West Des Moines Police Department

Community Education/Outreach
250 Mills Civic Parkway
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Phone: 515-222-3333
Fax: 515-222-3331

National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org
www.usaonwatch.org

**West Des Moines
Police Department**



Home Security

**"Crime Prevention Is
Everybody's Business"**

**Community Education/Outreach
222-3333**

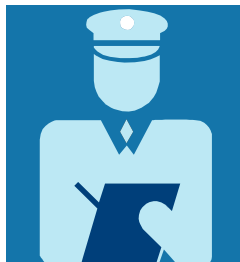
www.wdm-ia.com

If you were locked out of your house would you still be able to get in? Maybe you keep an unlocked window in the back, or a hidden key in your mailbox or on top of a window ledge?

You may think this a good idea but guess what? If you can get in easy so can a burglar!

One out of six homes will be burglarized this year. For a small amount of time and money you can make your home more secure and reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

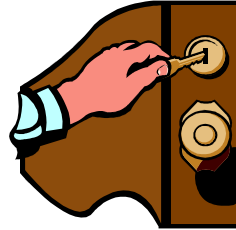
Many burglars will spend no longer than 60 seconds trying to break into a home. Good locks—and good neighbors who watch out for each other—can be big deterrents to burglars.



Check The Locks

Did you know that in almost half of all completed residential burglaries, thieves simply breezed in through unlocked doors or crawled through unlocked windows?

- Make sure every external door has a sturdy, well-installed dead bolt lock. Key-in-the-knob locks are not enough.



- Sliding glass doors can offer easy access if they are not properly secured. You can secure them by installing commercially available locks or putting a broomstick or a dowel in the inside track to jam the door. To prevent the door from being lifted off the track, drill a hole through the sliding door frame and into the fixed frame. Insert a pin into the hole.
- Lock double-hung windows with key locks or “pin” the windows by drilling a small hole at a 45 degree angle between the inner and outer frames, then insert a small nail that can be removed. Secure basement windows with grilles or grates.
- Instead of hiding keys around the outside of your home, give an extra key to a neighbor you trust.
- When you move into a new residence, rekey the locks.

Check The Doors

A lock on a flimsy door is about as effective as locking your car door but leaving your window down.

- All outside doors should be metal or solid wood.
- If your doors don't fit tightly in their frames, install weather stripping around them.
- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all outside doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains are not secure!

Check The Outside

Look at your home from the outside. Check out the following tips:

- Thieves hate bright lights. Install outside lights and keep them on at night.
- Keep your yard clean. Prune back shrubbery so it doesn't hide doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that a thief could use to climb to an upper-level window.
- Clearly display your house number so that police and other emergency workers can find your home quickly.
- If you are gone, make your home look and sound occupied. Put interior lights, radios, TVs, etc. on timers to go on and off throughout the evening.
- Leave shades, blinds, and curtains in normal positions. Don't let your mail pile up! Call the post office to stop delivery or have someone pick it up.
- Make a list of your valuables—TVs, stereos, computers, jewelry. Have jewelry appraised. Take photos of items, list serial numbers. Engrave items with an appropriate marking. Be familiar with insurance coverage.